

## Anna Jaaskelainen: My Journey



For Occupational Therapist Week 2020, we chat to a member of staff about their journey to becoming an Occupational Therapist (OT).

In this issue, we talk to Anna Jaaskelainen who works as a paediatric occupational therapist in educational services for Cognus.

I feel occupational therapy has chosen me.

During my 20's and 30's, I studied creative arts and worked in a variety of roles from drama facilitator to an art house cinema manager.

But it was when I became a mum in my early 30's that I discovered a role I truly enjoyed as an activities coordinator in a local dementia home. A friend, who is an occupational therapist, recognised my potential for the role and recommended

studying it. I studied Pg Dip/MSc course at South Bank University and adored the holistic and person-centred outlook of the studies.

I've been an OT for nearly two years. After graduating, I worked in an acute adult mental health ward, which enabled me to make a difference to lives that were effected by mental health challenges, by supporting people back to occupations that mattered to them and creating daily activities to support recovery, wellbeing and independence.

During my studies, I completed paediatrics placement, which I loved. Therefore, my next and current role is in a school where I get to support young people to access their education, self-care activities, social interactions, and play.

I was looking for a career that was therapeutic, creative and had variety. Occupational therapy has provided me with opportunities for ongoing learning, while helping others and working creatively.

Occupational therapy is also recognised around the world and offers job opportunities worldwide. Currently, I also appreciate the job security occupational therapy career has provided me.

My advice for those of thinking of occupational therapy as a career is go for it. It's a highly rewarding career full of exciting opportunities for life-long learning.

This is why I love being an OT.

This is why I'll always #ChooseOT.

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